

ARIZONA Planning Bulletin



Phoenix South Resource Management Plan
Sonoran Desert National Monument Resource Management Plan

Bureau of Land Management • Phoenix Field Office

February 2005, Vol. 3

Update on Alternatives Development

Last winter and spring, BLM held public workshops to discuss goals, objectives, and management alternatives to be evaluated in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Phoenix South and Sonoran Desert National Monument (SDNM) Resource Management Plans (RMPs). Many comments and suggestions were offered that we used to develop and refine the preliminary range of alternatives. Thanks to everyone who has helped us. Since then, we have been working to develop alternative management approaches for the various resources and land uses. These have been combined into a set of preliminary alternatives that address the multiple uses and resources BLM is responsible for managing on the public lands.

A brief summary of some highlights of the preliminary alternatives are inside. Two sets of alternatives have been developed, one for the SDNM and one for the Phoenix South planning area. Each set includes a “no action” (called A) and three preliminary “action” alternatives (B, C, D). Alternative A describes current management as modified by the SDNM proclamation. Alternative B provides a wide array of visitor experiences with increased public use and human influence. Alternative C provides a mix of recreation and public use opportunities and conservation of natural landscapes with some restrictions on uses. Alternative D emphasizes conservation of natural landscapes and resources, with decreased human influence and more use restrictions.

As you review the alternatives you will likely find that some alternatives better meet your interests and concerns than others. The goal of the range of alternatives is to offer the public options for management of the public lands. BLM’s preferred alternative has not yet been chosen. Based on your input, we will revise the preliminary alternatives, select a preferred alternative, and produce the Draft RMP/EIS.

Public Input Requested

Public workshops are scheduled for the last week of February and the first week of March to discuss the preliminary draft alternatives. A schedule of workshops is on the back of this bulletin. Please attend one of these to share your ideas with BLM.

Meanwhile, a complete set of the preliminary alternatives, along with maps, can be reviewed at:

http://www.az.blm.gov/LUP/sonoran/son_des.htm

or at the reference desks of the following public libraries:

Ajo, Apache Junction, Arizona City, Avondale, Buckeye, Casa Grande, Chandler, El Mirage, Flagstaff, Florence, Gila Bend, Gilbert (Southeast Regional), Glendale, Globe, Laveen, Litchfield Park, Marana, Maricopa, Mesa, Oracle, Peoria, Phoenix (Central, Cholla Branch), Queen Creek, Scottsdale (Civic Center), Sells (Tohono O’odham Community College), Surprise (Northwest Regional), Tempe, Tucson (Main, Miller-Golf Branch, Mission Branch, Oro Valley), Yuma (Third Avenue)

or at BLM’s Phoenix Field Office, Tucson Field Office or Yuma Field Office

The preliminary alternatives will also be available on CD at the workshops and the Phoenix Field Office.

As you review the alternatives, you may wish to consider these questions:

- Are your issues and concerns addressed in at least one of the alternatives?
- Can your uses of the public land be accommodated in at least one alternative?
- Are the resources important to you adequately protected in at least one alternative?
- Are there specific topics we haven’t addressed?

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS:

Special Recreation Management Area: provides pro-active recreation management

Back Country Recreation Management Zone (RMZ): recreation dispersed & independent, few recreation facilities, natural landscape generally maintained

Community Interface & Front Country RMZ: concentrated & increased recreation use, recreation facilities available; uses more intense in Phoenix South, uses compatible with resource protection in SDNM

Area of Critical Environmental Concern: conservation of natural or cultural resources prioritized

Cultural Management Area: important cultural resources are found and maintained

Wildlife Management Area: important wildlife resources are found and maintained

Perennial grazing: grazing year-round; Ephemeral grazing: grazing when winter rains produce adequate spring annual forage; Perennial-ephemeral grazing: year-round grazing and additional numbers when winter rains produce adequate spring annual forage

Visual Resources: Classes used to manage existing landscape character, Class I preserves, II retains, III partially retains, and IV supports major modifications.

| HIGHLIGHTS OF SONORAN DESERT NATIONAL MONUMENT PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| A (No Action) | B | C | D |
| Recreation: No Recreation Areas or Zones, recreation according to general management prescriptions | Recreation: 1 Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) Front Country 84,000 acres Back Country 402,300 acres | Recreation: 1 Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) Front Country 58,200 acres Back Country 428,100 acres | Recreation: 1 Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) Front Country 21,700 acres Back Country 464,600 acres |
| Transportation: Wilderness Areas closed to motorized vehicles & bicycles 2,500 acres (ACEC) closed to motorized travel In remaining area, vehicles must stay on existing or designated routes (600 miles open) | Transportation: Wilderness Areas closed to motorized vehicles & bicycles In remaining area vehicles must stay on designated routes (530 miles open, 74 miles closed) | Transportation: Wilderness Areas closed to motorized vehicles & bicycles; additional 114,400 acres closed to motorized vehicles In remaining area vehicles must stay on designated routes (450 miles open, 158 miles closed) | Transportation: Wilderness Areas closed to motorized vehicles & bicycles; additional 151,800 acres closed to motorized vehicles In remaining area vehicles must stay on designated routes (307 miles open, 301 miles closed) |
| Special Areas: 1 Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) 2,500 acres | Special Areas: ACEC eliminated because Monument designation provides appropriate protections | Special Areas: Same as B | Special Areas: Same as B |
| Visual Resources: Class I 157,700 acres Class II 25,000 acres Class III 403,000 acres | Visual Resources: Class I 157,700 acres Class II 244,000 acres Class III 85,000 acres | Visual Resources: Class I 296,700 acres Class II 190,000 acres | Visual Resources: Class I 479,700 acres Class II 7,000 acres |
| Wilderness Characteristics: N/A | Wilderness Characteristics: 83,400 acres | Wilderness Characteristics: 114,400 acres | Wilderness Characteristics: 151,800 acres |
| Grazing: Current preference perennial, perennial-ephemeral, ephemeral South of I-8: Grazing ends when current permits expire | Grazing: North of I-8: allotments open, perennial only South of I-8: Grazing ends when current permits expire | Grazing: North of I-8: allotments open, ephemeral only South of I-8: Grazing ends when current permits expire | Grazing: North of I-8: All allotments closed, No grazing South of I-8: Grazing ends when current permits expire |
| Minerals: Closed to mineral entry except valid existing rights | Minerals: Same as A | Minerals: Same as A | Minerals: Same as A |
| Lands & Realty: All lands within boundary retained | Lands & Realty: Lands retained; Acquire inholdings when available | Lands & Realty: Same as B | Lands & Realty: Same as B |
| Utility Corridors: 3 corridors | Utility Corridors: 1 corridor | Utility Corridors: 1 corridor, underground only | Utility Corridors: No corridors |

| HIGHLIGHTS OF PHOENIX SOUTH PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| A (No Action) | B | C | D |
| Recreation: No Recreation Areas or Zones, recreation according to general management prescriptions No Scenic Routes | Recreation: 6 Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA) Community Interface 20,100 acres Front Country 402,700 acres Back Country 505,400 acres 2 Scenic Routes | Recreation: 5 SRMAs Community Interface 14,700 acres Front Country 256,300 acres Back Country 655,000 acres 2 Scenic Routes | Recreation: 4 SRMAs Community Interface 10,500 acres Front Country 188,900 acres Back Country 726,700 acres |
| Transportation: Wilderness Areas closed to motorized vehicles and bicycles 9,500 acres (Coffee Pot ACEC) closed to motorized travel 47,400 acres undesignated In remaining area vehicles must stay on existing or designated routes | Transportation: Wilderness Areas closed to motorized vehicles and bicycles 40 acres limited to ATV & motorcycles In remaining area vehicles must stay on designated routes (In Ajo 425 miles open, 37 miles closed) | Transportation: Wilderness Areas closed to motorized vehicles and bicycles 40 acres limited to ATV & motorcycles In remaining area vehicles must stay on designated routes (In Ajo 350 miles open, 110 miles closed) | Transportation: Wilderness Areas closed to motorized vehicles and bicycles; Additional 313,500 acres closed to motorized vehicles 40 acres limited to ATV & motorcycles In remaining area vehicles must stay on designated routes (In Ajo 182 miles open, 281 miles closed) |
| Special Areas: 1 ACEC 9,600 acres | Special Areas: No ACEC | Special Areas: 1 ACEC 14,350 acres | Special Areas: 4 ACECs 285,400 acres |
| Natural & Cultural: No Cultural Management Area (CMA) No Wildlife Management Area (WMA) | Natural & Cultural: Same as A | Natural & Cultural: 2 CMAs 143,600 acres 4 WMAs 440,300 acres | Natural & Cultural: No CMA 1 WMA 338,900 acres |
| Visual Resources: Class I 91,700 acres Class II 25,000 acres Class III 804,300 acres | Visual Resources: Class I 91,700 acres Class II 231,800 acres Class III 487,340 acres Class IV 110,600 acres | Visual Resources: Class I 148,860 acres Class II 411,180 acres Class III 365,620 acres | Visual Resources: Class I 297,480 acres Class II 419,020 acres Class III 203,260 acres |
| Wilderness Characteristics: N/A | Wilderness Characteristics: Same as A | Wilderness Characteristics: 134,200 acres | Wilderness Characteristics: 290,480 acres |
| Grazing: Current preference perennial, perennial-ephemeral, ephemeral | Grazing: Current allotments open perennial only | Grazing: Current allotments open ephemeral only | Grazing: All allotments closed no grazing |
| Minerals: 605,100 acres currently closed to mineral entry | Minerals: Same as A | Minerals: 666,000 acres closed to mineral entry | Minerals: 849,240 acres closed to mineral entry |
| Lands & Realty: Dispose of 28,480 acres | Lands & Realty: Dispose of: 39,950 acres - any method 10,000 acres - RPP only | Lands & Realty: Dispose of: 33,340 acres - any method 6,820 acres - RPP only | Lands & Realty: Dispose of: 22,690 acres - any method |
| Utility Corridors: 10 multi-use corridors | Utility Corridors: 1 additional corridor | Utility Corridors: 1 additional corridor | Utility Corridors: No additional corridors, El Paso-Ajo corridor underground only |

Other Resources & Uses Included in the Preliminary Alternatives: Air Quality, Fire & Fuels Management, Paleontology, Geology & Caves, Wild Burros, Hazards and Public Safety

Phoenix South/SDNM Planning Process
Bureau of Land Management
Phoenix Field Office
21605 North 7th Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85027

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Phoenix South and Sonoran Desert National Monument Planning

Information can be previewed at
http://www.az.blm.gov/LUP/sonoran/son_des.htm
For questions, call 1-866-627-7850

2005 PUBLIC WORKSHOPS ON PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES

BUCKEYE

Tuesday, February 22 – 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Buckeye Chamber of Commerce
Large Conference Room
508 E. Monroe Avenue

AJO

Wednesday, February 23 – 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Curley School
201 Esperanza Avenue

CASA GRANDE

Thursday, February 24 – 6:00 to 8:00 PM

The Garnet at Casa Grande
510 E. 8th Street
(North of Florence Blvd. off Trekell Rd.)

PHOENIX

Tuesday, March 1 – 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Deer Valley Community Center
(19th Avenue & Loop 101)
North Multipurpose Room
2001 W. Wahalla Lane

TUCSON

Wednesday, March 2 – 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Quail Run Elementary School Cafeteria
4600 W. Cortaro Farms Road

YUMA

Thursday, March 3 – 6:00 to 8:00 PM

BLM Yuma Field Office
2555 E. Gila Ridge Road

Please submit your comments by March 11. Comments may be submitted at the workshops or:

- By mail to BLM Phoenix Field Office, 21605 N. 7th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85027, Attention SDNM-Phoenix South Plan
- At az_sdnm_phx_south@blm.gov